

## SHORTER NOTES

THE FLORIDA ROYAL PALM.—As previously recorded in *Journal of the New York Botanical Garden*, 5: 131, I visited, in company with Professor P. H. Rolfs, in March of this year, the colony of royal palms on Paradise Key in extreme southern Florida. I also visited with him another colony of these trees near Lemon City, a few miles north of Miami. Having in mind the proposition of Mr. O. F. Cook, that the Florida royal palm is a distinct species from the tree of Cuba, I carefully examined these trees and collected material from them, in order to satisfy myself as to the value of Mr. Cook's suggestion. The previous spring and autumn I had spent in Cuba and had become intimately acquainted with the tree there, obtaining abundant specimens for study. I wish to record that my observations are conclusive, I think, to show that the species are absolutely identical in foliage, inflorescence, and fruit, and that the greater size claimed by Mr. Cook for the Florida tree, does not hold for those that I examined at either point in Florida. As to the bulging trunk which Mr. Cook apparently thinks so characteristic, I would say that that occurs also in the Florida tree. There is a difference in habitat, however, between the greater number of royal palms of Cuba, which grow most abundantly on the upland, though I have repeatedly seen them growing on the borders of marshes, and the Florida trees, which stand just above the general level of the Everglades, on a low rocky ledge, amid a dense undergrowth of shrubs.

It should be said that I have not seen the colony of trees from which the specimen came on which Mr. Cook bases his *Roystonia Floridana* (*Curtiss*, no. 2676), which grow on the western border of the Everglades, some miles from the trees visited by us, so it is within the limits of possibility that the tree of the southeastern Everglades and that of the western Everglades are different, but an examination of a cotype of Mr. Cook's species does not give much chance for that view to be correct. I am therefore inclined to regard *Roystonia Floridana* as a straight synonym of *Roystonia regia*.

N. L. BRITTON.

OTTO KUNTZE ON SEQUOIA. — One of Kuntze's innovations is the reference of the two living species of *Sequoia* to the genus *Steinhaueria*.\* The latter was established by Presl in 1838 † to include certain strobili of unknown affinity, so-called in honor of Henry Steinhauer. Three species were described, *i. e.*, *subglobosa*, *oblonga* and *minuta*, all from the Cretaceous at Perutz, Bohemia. A variety of remains of a more or less doubtful character have since been referred to this genus by various authors, which it would be unprofitable for me to discuss here. For a long time Presl's *subglobosa* has been assumed to represent cones of *Sequoia Sternbergi* Heer, and *minuta* the cones of *Sequoia Langsdorfii* (Brongn.) Heer, while *oblonga* has included a variety of objects, *e. g.*, fruits of *Liquidambar europaeum* A. Br.

Endlicher in 1847 established *Sequoia* for the California redwood. Now supposing that some day it is conclusively proven that *Sequoia sempervirens* is identical with *Sequoia Langsdorfii* which it resembles very much and which ranges in considerable abundance from the upper Cretaceous through the Tertiary. Should we then name the redwood *Steinhaueria minuta* under which name Presl described certain fossil cones whose identification with those of *Sequoia Langsdorfii* is not altogether beyond question? I hold not. Priority may demand it but common sense makes it ridiculous, and so long as there are more students of the living than of the extinct floras of the globe, just so long would it be unwise to resurrect a name which was nothing but the name of a form-genus. It may be strictly canonical, but it would display a reverence for canon unsurpassed by some of the early fathers of "the true church." The strict interpretation of priority discloses many weird names, especially in the domain of fossil plants, such as *Palaeoxyris*, which may be vegetable or may be Paleozoic Selachian egg-cases; in either case it is in no wise related to the living genus *Xyris*, or *Prototaxites*, which in all probability is a Devonian fucoid in no wise related to *Taxites*.

The case presented by *Sequoia* is however an anomalous one that is not likely to present itself very often, and one that it

\* Post & Kuntze, *Lexicon Generum Phanerogamarum*, 533 Stuttgart, 1904.

† Sternberg, *Fl. d. Vorwelt*, 2: 202.

seems to me should be settled once for all, by special dispensation, if no other way is available. While generic names are intended, I suppose, to be merely appellative and not descriptive, I cannot believe that it is for the best interests of science to perpetuate Kuntze's suggestion.

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## REVIEWS

### **A New Handbook of the Genera of Freshwater Algae\***

Students and collectors often ask for a convenient work by which to identify the common algae of pond and brook which arouse the interest of every user of a microscope. There has been no good manual to recommend, for the works of Wolle and Cooke, never satisfactory, are quite out of date, and much the same may be said of the more elaborate works of the continental algologists. Professor West has produced a book which will be exceedingly useful, not only to amateur and more advanced students, but to teachers particularly; for within a surprisingly small compass he has given a good summary of recent work on the phylogeny of the algae, and brief but sufficiently clear descriptions to enable one without great difficulty to identify most of the genera of the United States. If disappointment is felt that specific diagnoses are not furnished, it is to be remembered that for a single author to include such in so extensive and diversified a group, would be to produce a work hardly more accurate than those we have found so unusable, as well as unwieldy in size.

The author divides the algae into the six classes, Rhodophyceae, Phaeophyceae, Chlorophyceae, Heterokontae, Bacillariaceae and Myxophyceae (Cyanophyceae). Many will doubt the wisdom of including the last two groups with the higher algae but it will be at least a convenience to have this outline of their genera. The Peridinieae have been excluded for lack of space and because of doubt as to their affinities with algae. Similarly, the Characeae are omitted as being of higher organization than algae. It is certainly however, open to question whether the Characeae show

\* West, G. S. *A Treatise on the British Freshwater Algae*. Svo. Pp. xvi + 372. f. 1-166. Cambridge, at the University Press, 1904. Price, 10s. 6d., net.